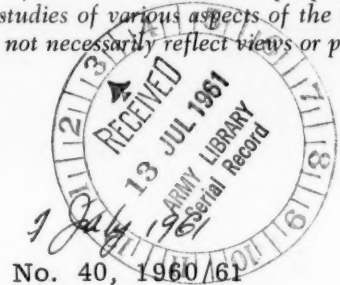


# SOVIET AFFAIRS ANALYSIS SERVICE

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Outline Of Reference Paper On:

No. 40, 1960/61

## WHAT IS BEHIND THE SHARPENING OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

The primacy of domestic considerations over foreign policy in the Soviet Union may be discerned in that country's aggressive stance toward West Germany. Various signs show that the Berlin situation will be used to divert popular attention from the Soviet failure to fulfill economic plans and to justify the necessary tightening of belts.

The fierce propaganda attacks on West Germany, which began on June 11 with the publication of the memoranda handed President Kennedy by Premier Khrushchev at the Vienna Summit, attempt to show that the "question of peace treaty is a question of the national security of the USSR."

At a public meeting staged by the Soviet leaders on June 21, the present political situation was equated with the situation preceding Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. Dressed in general's uniform, Khrushchev accused the West of planning aggression against the USSR. He urged the country to be on guard against "the enemies of socialism" and declared that this renewed vigilance "may compel the Soviet Union to increase appropriations for armaments, in order to increase and perfect our defenses, and if need be, to increase the size of our armed forces."

The Soviet campaign against the "German militarists" is double-edged as it suggests that a powerful Germany will turn on its Western allies. Obviously, the Soviet leaders are trying to confuse public opinion in the West and to drive a wedge between England, France, the United States and the other N. A. T. O. powers.

Analysis of the entire campaign shows, however, that the main reason for the Soviet aggressiveness is the desire to create an impression of popular support for the present Soviet political line, which tries to draw a picture of an "unfavorable international situation" to justify increasing military expenditures.

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No. 40, 1960/61

## WHAT IS BEHIND THE SHARPENING OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Various signs point to the probability that the sudden, almost hysterical aggressiveness of Soviet foreign policy toward West Germany is largely related to Soviet domestic policy and comprises an attempt to use the West as a convenient scapegoat for the Soviet failures to fulfill economic plans.

The beginning of the campaign coincided with the publication on June 11 in Pravda of the memoranda handed to President Kennedy by Premier Khrushchev in Vienna. The alleged reason given for the publication of the notes was that they had been incorrectly reported in the Western press. The memorandum on the German question accused the West German government of cultivating sabre-rattling militarism and of trying to create a dangerous hotbed of conflicts on German soil by setting the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition against each other.

Emphasizing in the note that the "question of a peace treaty is a question of the national security of the USSR," the Soviets "are of the opinion that the inviolability of the existing German borders must be given legal form, and that the situation in West Berlin must be normalized on the basis of reasonable consideration of the interests of all parties."

The Soviet thus suggested the immediate convocation of a conference to conclude a peace treaty or else, by way of an intermediate solution, "to appeal to both German states to come to an agreement between themselves within six months on the procedure for the conclusion of a peace treaty and for reunification." If they cannot agree by this date, "steps are to be taken for the conclusion of a peace treaty with both German states or with one of them as the countries concerned see fit."

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The Soviet leaders will not insist that West Germany immediately leave N. A. T. O., that East Germany be recognized before a peace treaty is signed, that identical texts be drawn up for the peace treaties with East and West Germany, but they do concede that a "symbolic" contingent of U. S., British, French and Soviet troops or United Nations forces can be stationed in West Berlin. Traffic between the "free city" of Berlin and the outside world through East Germany "must be solved only on the basis of corresponding agreements with East Germany."

The next step in the new Soviet campaign was Premier Khrushchev's speech of June 15 over the Soviet television network, in which he announced that

after the conclusion of a peace treaty, those countries anxious to maintain links with West Berlin will have to come to an agreement with the East German government on access to West Berlin and communications with the city.... If any country undertakes to violate peace and to cross foreign borders--on land, water or in air--it will assume full responsibility for the consequences of the aggression and will receive a fitting rebuff (Pravda, June 16, 1961).

On June 21, the 20th anniversary of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, the Soviet leaders staged a public meeting in the Kremlin, designed to equate the present-day political situation with the situation preceding Hitler's attack. Dressed in a uniform of a general, Khrushchev gave a distorted picture of the course of past events, and suggested that the USSR was today on the verge of a war with the West. He charged "the ruling circles of the Western powers with encouraging and supporting the plans of the German revanchists, who would like to turn the German question into a trial of strength" (Izvestia, June 23, 1961).

Khrushchev emphasized that the balance of power in the world was not what it was 20 years ago: "Now not only the German revanchists but all who attempt to support them in a new adventure against us would share the fate of Hitler.... If you unleash a war, it will be a suicide for you.... When you draw West Germany into an escapade, you are pushing the people of your own country toward suicide" (ibid.).

As he accused the West of planning aggression against the USSR, Khrushchev urged that the country

be on guard so that the enemies of socialism,  
the aggressive militaristic circles, do not catch us

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unawares.... This fact may compel the Soviet Union to increase appropriations for armaments, in order to increase and perfect our defenses, and if need be, to increase the size of our armed forces (ibid.).

The new campaign was dutifully picked up by the Soviet press. The Party theoretical organ Kommunist (No. 8, 1961) accused the United States of

...pursuing the same policy which a quarter of a century ago led to war and is today threatening mankind with new, more dreadful military disasters.... History has not taught the American imperialists anything. Now, as in the twenties, they are spending large sums on the restoration and modernization of the West German industry to revive the military potential of the German revenge-seekers (p. 13)

By suggesting that a powerful Germany will turn against its Western allies, the Soviet leaders are trying to confuse public opinion in the West and to drive a wedge between England, France and the United States:

The German imperialists have always eagerly taken any aid from the United States, assuring their trans-Atlantic patrons of their unconditional devotion to them. The German ruling circles were well aware of what they were doing--they regarded outside aid as the decisive condition for the successful implementation of a policy of revenge. Arming themselves with the aid of the United States, Great Britain and France, they are intending to use their military power not only against the USSR but also against the Western capitalist powers (ibid., p. 13).

The same idea is found in the magazine Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn (International Life, No. 4, 1961) and in an article in Ogonek (Flame) by the writer Ilya Ehrenburg, who described the modus operandi of the German militarists thus: "If bombs have to be hurled about, then in various directions. They are accustomed to march not only eastward, but also westward...." (No. 25, June 1961, p. 5).

A further stage in the campaign was a telephone call on June 26 to the Pentagon with the question as to whether any U-2's, equipped with photographic equipment capable of focusing on Soviet territory from outside its borders, were circling over Alaska. The Soviet commentaries on this clearly

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provocative question, published in the Soviet press, were aimed at alarming the Soviet population and the rest of the world.

What are the reasons for the present Soviet foreign policy? Certainly Moscow is eager to obtain as favorable a solution as possible for the situation which it has created out of Berlin within the shortest possible period. An analysis of the entire Soviet campaign suggests, however, that the main reason for it is to be found in the domestic rather than the foreign policy sphere. The Soviet leaders are holding up to the people the nightmare of danger from without to create the impression of popular support of the present political line. Hence Khrushchev and the Party Central Committee are trying to give their policy as much authority as possible. The award of the title "Heroic City" to Kiev 18 years after its liberation from the Germans is part of this policy. The title also raises the personal prestige of Khrushchev, who played a direct part in the political leadership on the Ukrainian front and in the Ukrainian underground movement. On June 21, he was given most of the credit for the victory at Stalingrad.

Internal problems, especially the forthcoming Twenty-second Party Congress in October, are compelling Khrushchev to make a separate peace treaty with the East German government and thus provide some pressure toward a solution of a problem raised in the form of an ultimatum three years ago but in which he has since made no progress. Serious lack of success in fulfilling the state economic plans, frequently referred to in the Soviet press, also makes it urgent to find a scapegoat. By finding reasons for increasing military expenditures, Khrushchev can place part of the blame for failures in the Soviet economy on the "unfavorable international situation." A final reason for believing that the new sharpening of the Berlin and German questions is largely for internal effect is the sudden change from the quiet atmosphere of Vienna a few weeks ago to the present tension in spite of the absence of any real change in the international situation.